# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT OFFICE TECHNIQUES DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY

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OPERATIONAL MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL PREDICTION PROGRAMS OF THE TECHNIQUES DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY

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Operational Marine Environmental Prediction Programs of the Techniques
Development Laboratory

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#### ABSTRACT

The Techniques Development Laboratory of the National Weather Service began developing automated marine environmental prediction programs in 1965. These programs are organized into three tasks—oceanic forecasting, coastal forecasting, and Great Lakes forecasting. The seven programs which are used for operational forecasting are briefly described. They are programs for forecasting ocean waves, extratropical storm surges, hurricane storm surges, coastal winds, Great Lakes winds, Great Lakes waves, and Lake Erie storm surges.

### INTRODUCTION

The Techniques Development Laboratory of the National Weather Service became involved in developmental work in marine environmental prediction in 1965. It started with the hiring of one person who was scheduled to work only part time on marine environmental problems. The increased requirements for operational forecast techniques in the marine area have led to increased effort. We now have eight professional persons and usually one or two part time student trainees in our Marine Techniques Branch.

The work of the Branch is organized into three tasks--oceanic forecasting, coastal forecasting, and Great Lakes forecasting. The three tasks are subdivided as shown below:

- 1. Oceanic Forecasting
  - a. Ocean Waves\*
  - b. Oil Spill Trajectories
- 2. Coastal Forecasting
  - a. Hurricane Storm Surge\*
  - b. Extratropical Storm Surge\*
  - c. Coastal Wind\*
  - d. Beach Erosion
  - e. Coastal Waves
- 3. Great Lakes Forecasting
  - a. Wind\*
  - b. Waves\*
  - c. Storm Surge\*
  - d. Fog

For any particular forecast time wind data are obtained from:

1. The current PE forecast, and

2. A wind and wave history file updated by the previous program run made 12 hours earlier.

The duration of the wind is determined by comparing the wind direction at time T with that at time T-6, etc., until a wind shift of more than  $45^{\circ}$  is found. The duration is therefore determined to be 0, 6, 12, or 18 hours.

Once the duration at a grid point is determined, an effective wind speed is calculated for that duration time. The effective wind speed is a weighted mean such that the more recent winds are given heavier weight. Each wind contributes as much as all of the earlier winds in the calculation.

The expressions for wave height and period are:

$$H_w = K_1 V^2 D + K_2$$
  
 $T_w = V (K_3 + K_4 D) + K_5$ 

where  $\mathbf{H}_{\mathbf{W}}$  is significant wave height,  $\mathbf{T}_{\mathbf{W}}$  is significant wave period,  $\mathbf{V}$  is effective wind speed,  $\mathbf{D}$  is duration of wind, and  $\mathbf{K}'$ s are constants.

At computation points near land or ice, consideration is given to the possibility of fetch limitations. A determination is made in the upstream direction from each computation point for the existence of land or ice within approximately 1 or 2 grid lengths. If land or ice is found within 1 grid length, the wave height is reduced to 70 percent of its value. Land or ice between 1 and 2 grid lengths causes the wave height to be reduced to 90 percent of the computed value.

Wind-wave calculations are made for +00, +12, +24, +36, and +48 hours from the time of the latest PE output. Variables which can be printed out include effective wind speed, significant wave height, period, and direction.

Calculations of swell are made for ocean points of the NMC octagonal grid. The program is given a map factor at each grid point. These map factors are used to determine the map projection distance the swell travels, since this distance is a function of latitude.

The swell forecasts are based upon the +00, +12, and +24 hour forecasts of the wind-waves. A minimum travel time of 15 hours is required before a wind-wave is considered to have moved from its generation area to become a swell. Therefore, to make a swell forecast for time T, wind-waves at times T-24, T-36, T-48, T-60, and T-72 hours are used.

ment is satisfield, swell period and height are computed for the affected point by the following expressions:

$$T_{s} = (T_{w}^{2} + C_{2}t) \frac{1}{2}$$
 $H_{s} = H_{w} (T_{s}/T_{w}) \frac{C_{3}}{2} \cos 4$ 

where Ts is the period of the swell,

 $T_{\rm W}$  is the period of the wind-wave leaving the generation area,

t is travel time from generating point to affected point,  $H_{\rm S}$  is the swell height,

H, is the initial wind-wave height,

is the angle between direction of center line of swell propagation and direction to affected grid point,

and C2 and C3 are constants.

Since any grid point can be hit by many swells, only the greatest swell height is retained at the affected point.

Swell calculations are made for +24, +36, and +48 hours. Variables which can be printed out include swell height, period, and direction.

An overall wave condition, a combined-height field, is constructed as the square root of the sum of the squares of the wind-wave and swell heights.

Northern Hemisphere charts of wind-wave height, swell height, and combined-wave height are prepared. Sections of these hemispheric charts are extracted for facsimile transmission. Figure 2 is a sample Pacific area chart for the west coast FOFAX circuit. Wave heights are depicted by contours drawn at 3-foot intervals with maximum values printed at the centers.

This wave and swell forecasting system is for deep-water wave conditions on the high seas. At this point we feel that the wave conditions in offshore waters of moderate depth may be adequately forecast. Certainly, breaker and surf forecasts are not to be implied from these high seas forecasts.

Although the significant wave height (defined as the average height of the one-third highest waves) is the variable which is forecast, other properties of wave height distribution are of value. Statistical analyses and theoretical investigations (U.S. Army Coastal Engineering Research Center, 1966) show the following relationships:

- a. Mean wave height = 0.6 x significant wave height.
- b. Mean height of highest 10% of waves = 1.3 x significant wave height.
- c. Maximum wave height = 1.9 x significant wave height.

These relationships indicate possible wave heights, for any given forecast, to be almost double the significant wave height.

Figure 4 shows a sample teletype message for wind forecasts along the east coast. This message is for 1200 GMT on the 6th of the month (061200). The third line shows the valid times of the forecasts from 6 hours to 42 hours in advance. The body of the message contains the wind forecasts in the form ddff--dd in tens of degrees and ff in knots.

## HURRICANE STORM SURGE FORECAST PROGRAM

Whenever a hurricane approaches or crosses the coastline the sea level increases from a few feet to more than 20 feet above the normal tide level. Much of the loss of life associated with these storms is caused by the storm-induced rises of sea level. Examples of storms costly in terms of lives are the hurricane of September 1900, in which over 6000 were lost in the Galveston area, hurricane Audrey of June 1957 which claimed several hundred lives in Louisiana, and most recently hurricane Camille of 1969 which was responsible for many lost lives in Mississippi and Louisiana. Tremendous property damage is also caused by the storm surges in harbors and along the open coast.

The storm surge is defined as the rise or fall of the sea level caused by a meteorological disturbance and is closely approximated by the algebraic difference between the observed tide and the normal astronomical tide as shown in figure 5.

Storm surge forecasts are valuable and essential to plan for protection of life and property in areas subject to storm surges. The Weather Service's National Hurricane Center is responsible for predicting storm surges associated with hurricanes and tropical storms for the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Successful forecasting of hurricane storm surges depends, of course, upon accurate forecasts of the intensity, size, and movement of the hurricanes themselves. Actual storm surge forecasts are made with the SPLASH (Special Program to List Amplitudes of Surges from Hurricanes) computerized numerical model for the east and Gulf coasts from Long Island to Texas (Jelesnianski 1972, 1974). This model consists of a storm traveling across a rectangular basin of variable depth. The storm surge driving forces from pressure and wind are determined from a tropical storm model. The driving forces are applied to a version of the storm surge equations. Numerical calculations are generally made for a grid distance of 4 mi (6 km) with a 2.5 min time interval between computations. The SPLASH model can be used for two types of storms: those that cross the coast and those that travel along the coast but do not actually landfall. For storms expected to cross the coast, the following information is given to the model: the landfall position of the storm; pressure drop in the storm while it traverses the continental shelf; the mean compass direction in which the storm will traverse the continental shelf just prior to landfall; the average storm speed just prior to landfall; and the radius of maximum wind, which is a measure of storm size.

For storms that do not landfall, five storm positions at 6-hr intervals are supplied to the model. Pressure drop and radius of maximum wind can also be varied in this version of SPLASH.

Calculations of storm surge, made from sea-level pressure analyses for the March 1962 storm agree quite well with observed storm surges (figure 9). Input data to the method, when used operationally, are values of sea-level pressure as forecast by the Primitive Equation numerical weather prediction model of the National Meteorological Center. The first severe coastal storm to which the method was applied was that of February 18-20, 1972. The storm surge calculations, based on pressure analyses, agreed reasonably well with the observations of storm surge. This comparison is shown in figure 10.

The forecasts are transmitted via teletype circuit (figure 11) to National Weather Service offices. The storm surge forecasts are combined with calculations of the astronomical tide and the resulting forecasts of storm tide are helpful to the marine forecasters of the Weather Service in preparing actual forecasts.

Our experience with the method has shown the great importance of accurate sea-level pressure forecasts when used as input data to the storm surge forecast method. Indications are that the method is useful and will be expanded to include other locations.

# . GREAT LAKES WIND FORECAST PROGRAM

An automated method of forecasting winds over the Great Lakes has been developed and put into operational use (Feit and Barrientos, 1974). The method was implemented in March 1973. The forecast technique is statistical in nature and is based on the Model Output Statistics (MOS) technique, which matches the output from a numerical model with observations and computes prediction equations.

The predictand data were marine observations taken by anemometer equipped ships participating in the National Weather Service's Great Lakes Marine Observations Program. The anemometers on these ships are checked for accuracy by the National Weather Service. These marine observations, unlike land based observations, have the problem of not being made at fixed locations. Therefore the observations were grouped according to the section of the Great Lakes in which they were made. These sectors were arbitrarily defined by dividing each lake into two or three relatively homogeneous parts. The 12 lake sectors are shown in figure 12.

There is generally more than one vessel taking wind observations in a given lake sector at any observation time. The problem of determining a representative wind observation was approached by selecting the maximum wind from all simultaneous observations and assuming that this wind occurs at the center of the lake sector. The marine observations are taken no closer than 5 miles to shore. Therefore, the land effects are considerably reduced and the observations are assumed to be representative of the over-water wind conditions.

The multiple regression-screening procedure was used to derive forecast equations. The data from all 12 lake sectors were pooled because of scarce data amounts in some lake sectors. This generalized approach results in some loss of accuracy in individual sectors but this loss is expected to be

dard method were made so that it could be completely automated.

A brief description of the method follows:

- vals are tabulated. Some of these are corrected for fetch width restrictions. Fetch length is then chosen for the wind direction at forecast time. No consideration is given to the effect of ice on the reduction of fetch length. This means that during late winter the actual fetch lengths will be less than those used in the calculations. Perhaps at a later time ice conditions can be considered in determining fetch lengths.
- b. The effect of duration time of the wind—the length of time the wind has been from the same general direction—is important in wave generation. The duration time is determined objectively for each forecast time by examining the wind directions during the previous 30 hours at 6-hour intervals. The time that the wind is within 45° of the wind at forecast time is used. In this manner the duration time is estimated to be 3, 9, 15, 21, 27, or 33 hours.
- c. An effective wind speed is determined by weighting the winds over the duration time such that the winds closest to forecast time are weighted the heaviest. A future improvement in the method may be more direct consideration of atmospheric stability by applying the air-lake temperature difference as an adjustment to the wind speed.
- d. Effective fetch is calculated as a function of the duration time and the effective wind speed. The effective fetch is compared to the real fetch and the smaller of the two is used in the wave height calculation.
- e. Significant wave height and wave period are then calculated by the Bretschneider method.

The Great Lakes wave forecast program is run twice daily after the 0000 GMT and 1200 GMT numerical weather model runs and the subsequent Great Lakes wind forecast runs. The wave forecasts are transmitted via teletype circuits as soon as practical after they are generated.

Figure 15 shows a sample teletype message for wave forecasts at the 64 forecast locations. The first line indicates this forecast is for the 6th of the month at 1200 GMT (061200). The forecasts are for  $\pm 1200$ ,  $\pm 12$ ,  $\pm 120$ , and  $\pm 1200$  hours and are expressed in feet.

## LAKE ERIE STORM SURGE FORECAST PROGRAM

The effects of several types of water level fluctuations on Lake Erie combine to produce the observed lake level. These fluctuations can be classed as long range, seasonal, and meteorologically-generated fluctuations.

Buffalo and Toledo during the 48-hour forecast period. The body of the message contains the storm surge forecasts, expressed in feet, for Buffalo and Toledo. Forecast values are given for each hour at Buffalo and for every second hour at Toledo.

The method is presently being expanded to include three additional forecast locations--Essexville, Michigan (Saginaw Bay), Lakeport, Michigan (Southern Lake Huron), and Green Bay, Wisconsin.

#### SUMMARY

The Techniques Development Laboratory has implemented several marine environmental prediction programs in recent years. These programs are for forecasting ocean and Great Lakes waves, hurricane storm surges, extratropical storm surges along the Atlantic coast and on Lake Erie, coastal wind conditions along the U. S. Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and winds over the Great Lakes.

These automated forecasts are used primarily as guidance at Forecast Offices of the National Weather Service in the preparation of the official forecasts. These marine environmental forecasts are nearly all based on input from numerical atmospheric models. Whenever a forecaster recognizes a deficiency in the forecasts of the numerical atmospheric model for a particular time, he can generally improve upon the automated marine environmental forecasts.

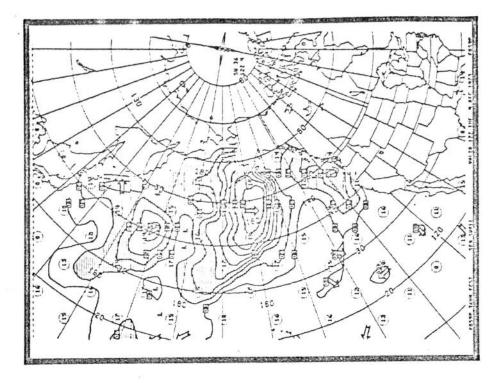
The automated marine environmental forecasts described in this paper are generally considered to be useful. The Techniques Development Laboratory will attempt to improve the existing marine forecast programs, expand them to include additional geographic areas, and will develop new programs for additional variables such as beach erosion and visibility.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Appreciation is expressed to the members of the Marine Techniques Branch of the Techniques Development Laboratory who have developed the forecast methods described in this report. Appreciation is also expressed to Herman Perrotti who prepared many of the figures and to Mary-Blue Battle for typing the manuscript.

## REFERENCES

- Bretschneider, C. L., "Forecasting Relations for Wave Generation," Look Lab Hawaii, Vol. 1, No. 3, July 1970, pp. 31-34.
- Feit, D. M. and C. S. Barrientos, "Great Lakes Wind Forecasts Based on Model Output Statistics," Proceedings of 17th Conference on Great Lakes Research, 1974, pp. 725-732.
- Jelesnianski, C. P., "SPLASH (Special Program to List Amplitudes of Surges form Hurricanes) I. Landfall Storms," NOAA Technical Memorandum NWS TDL-46, April 1972, 52 pp.



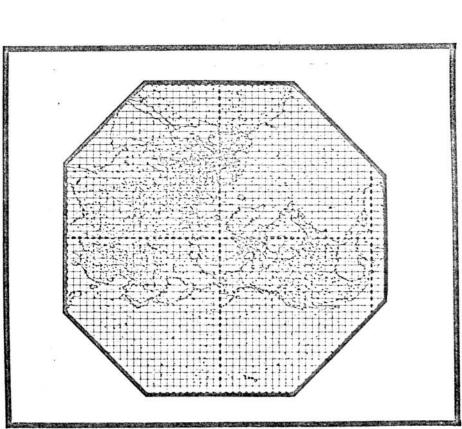


Figure 1. National Meteorological Cen-Figure 1977 point grid used for computation.

Figure 2. Sample 36-hour swell forecast chart for the Pacific. Height contours are drawn at intervals of 3 feet.

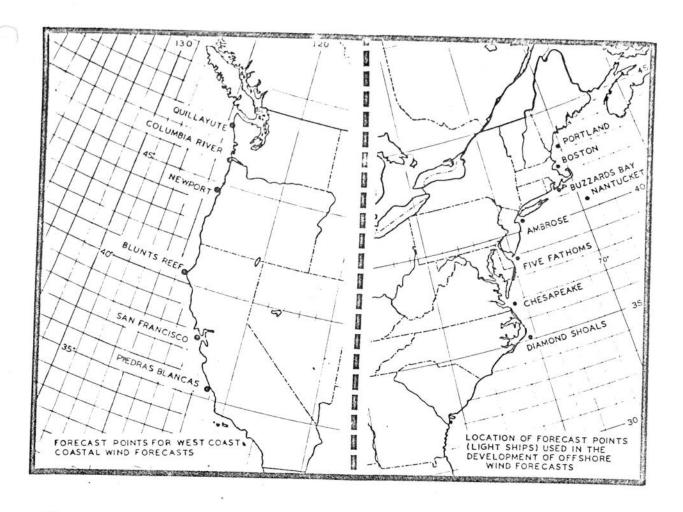


Figure 3. The forecast locations for which wind forecast equations were derived.

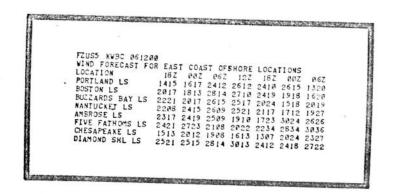


Figure 4. Wind forecast teltype message for East coast locations. Format of forecasts in body of report is ddff, where dd is direction in tens of degrees and ff is wind speed in knots.

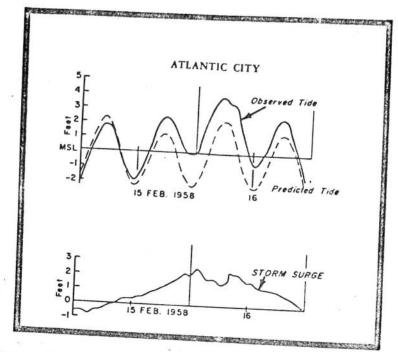


Figure 5. Example of Atlantic City tide data showing the observed tide, the predicted tide and the storm surge.

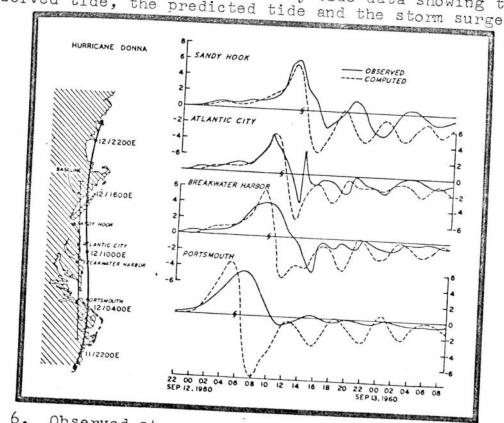
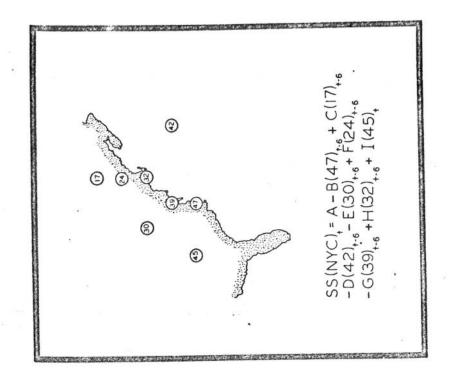


Figure 6. Observed storm surges and surges calculated by the SPLASH model for Hurricane Donna of 1960.



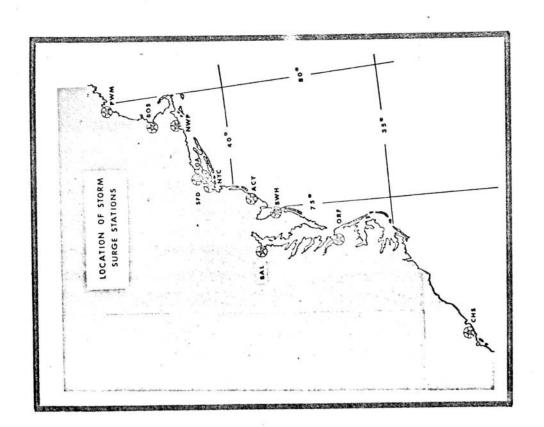
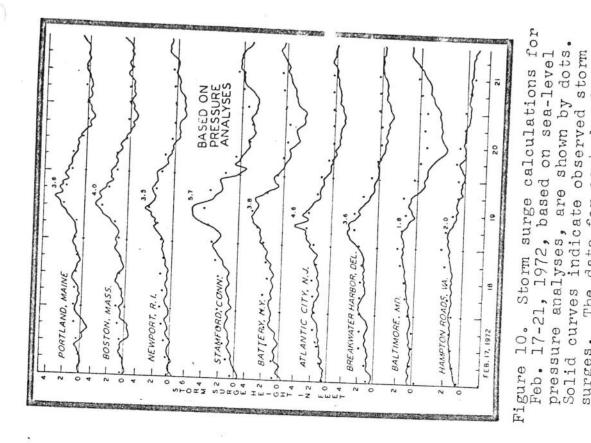


Figure 7. The 11 forecast locations for which extratropical storm surge forecast equations were derived.

storm surge. The number in parentheses of each term is the grid point for which sea-level pressure is used as a

predictor. The subscript on each term is the lag of the predictor in hours.

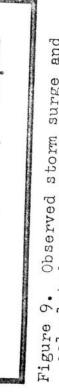
Figure 8. An extratropical storm surge forecast equation for New York. SS is



Observed storm surge and Solid curves are observed calculated storm surge for eight locations during the March 1962 of sea-level pressure. connect storm surge calculated 6-hourly intervals, based upon The dashed lines storm surge. analyses storm.

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surges. The date for each day is placed at the 1200 EST position. Maximum value of observed surge placed near peak of each curve.



MAR 5. 1962

6" HAMPTON ROADS, W.

ALL BALTIMORE, MD.

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BREAKWATER HARBOR, DEL.

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6" ATLANTIC CITY, N.J.

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WEW YORK, N.Y.

OIL WILLETS POINT, N.Y.

"[ BOSTON, MASS.

NEWPORT, R.I.

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PZUS3 KWBC 021200
EAST COAST STORM SURGE PORECAST IN FEET
122 182 002 062 122 182 002 062 122
PWM 0.1 0.4 0.5 0.7 0.7 0.9 0.8 0.9 0.7
BOS 0.1 0.2 0.3 0.4 0.4 0.5 0.4 0.6 0.3
NNP 0.8 1.0 1.1 1.2 1.2 1.3 1.1 1.1 0.9
SFD 1.0 1.1 1.2 1.2 0.9 0.7 0.6 0.1 0.0
SFD 1.0 1.0 1.0 1.3 1.2 1.0 1.0 0.8 0.7
LGA 1.0 1.0 1.0 1.3 1.2 1.0 0.9 0.7
ACY 0.8 0.9 1.0 0.9 0.9 0.9 0.8 0.8 0.7
ACY 0.8 0.9 1.0 0.9 0.9 0.9 0.7 0.7 0.6
BWH 1.1 1.1 1.2 1.0 0.9 0.9 0.7 0.7 0.6
BWH 0.9 0.8 0.8 0.8 0.8 0.8 0.7
ORP 0.9 0.8 0.9 0.8 0.8 0.8 0.8 0.7
ORP 0.9 0.8 0.9 0.8 0.8 0.8 0.7 0.6

PMM Portland, Maine
BOS Boston, Massachusetts
NWP Newport, Rhode Island
SFD Stamford, Connecticut
LGA Willets Point, New York
NYC Battery, New York
ACY Atlantic City, New Jersey
BWH Breakwater Harbor, Delaware
BAL Baltimore, Maryland
ONF Hampton Roads, Virginia
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Figure 11. Extratropical storm surge forecast message. Forecast heights are in feet. Valid times are indicated above each column. Station call signs are identified below message.

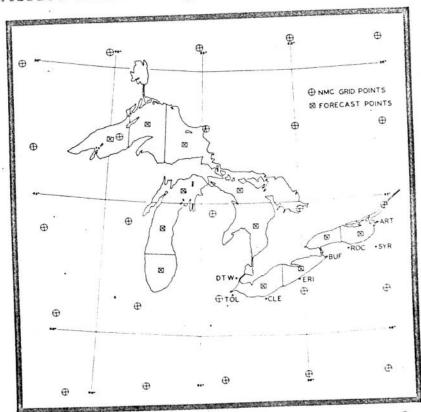


Figure 12. The 12 areas of the Great Lakes for which wind forecasts are made.

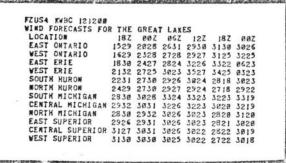


Figure 13. Wind forecast teletype message for the Great Lakes. Format of forecasts is ddff where dd is direction in tens of degrees and ff is speed in knots.



Figure 14. Great Lakes wave forecast points.

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FZUSZ XWBC 061200

SPEAT LAKES WAVE FORECAST HEIGHT IN FEET

90 HR
POINT NO. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9.18 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19

SUPERIOR 01 02 03 03 02 02 02 02 02 02

MICHIGAN 04 05 04 02 05 04 02 05 05 02 06 06 03 07

HURON 03 04 04 03 03 03 04 05 03 02 03 02

ERIE 03 04 04 03 03 03 03 04 04

12 KR
POINT NO. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19

SUPERIOR 01 02 03 03 02 02 02 02 02 02 01 02 02 01

MURON 02 03 03 02 02 03 04 01 04 04 04 04

MURON 02 03 03 02 04 03 03 03 03 03 03

SHERIE 02 04 03 03 03 04 04 05 05 05 05 05 06 05 04 04 04

MURON 04 05 05 05 07 04 06 07 07 07

SUPERIOR 05 02 03 03 03 03 03 03 03 03

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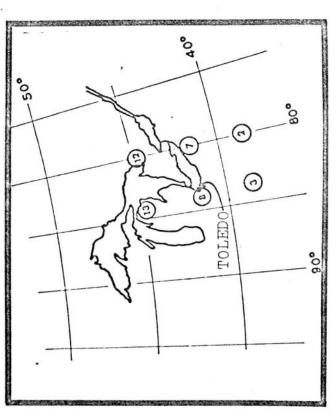
SUPERIOR 05 05 05 05 05 07 07 06 05 05 05 05 05 05 05 07 07 06

SUPERIOR 05 05 05 05 07 07 07 07

SUPERIOR 05 05 05 05 07 07 07 07

SUPERIOR 05 07
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Figure 15. Great Lakes wave forecast teletype message. The body of the message consists of wave height forecasts in feet.



TOL SS(4) = -34.7 +0.0639 P(13)\_6

- 0.1735 P(3)<sub>0</sub> + 0.0865 P(8)<sub>-6</sub>

+ 0.0573 P(13)<sub>0</sub>

Figure 16. A sample forecast equation for storm surge at Toledo, Ohio. Predictors are sea-level pressure at the grid points indicated. Subscripts indicate time lags in hours.

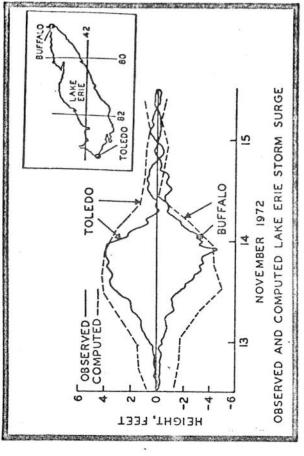


Figure 17. Observed and computed storm surge at Toledo and Buffalo during the storm of November 14, 1972.

MGE	DRIT SUNGE	IE STORM SUNGE
NIM I	2.1 MIN -	2.1 MIN -
SURGE	RGE SURGE	SURGE SURGE
		0.0
-0.2	.0-	-0.0 -0.
	0.0	,
9.2	9.	-0.1
		-0.1
0.0-	1	1
	1.2	-0.2
-0.1		
	1.2	-0.2
-0.5	-0-	-0-
	1.2	-0.2
-0.3	•	•
-0.5	-0-	-0-
1.0-	•	•

Figure 18. Teletype message for storm surge at Buffalo and Toledo. Body of message consists of storm surge height forecasts in feet.